

IN THE CLAIMS

The status of the claims is listed below.

1. (Currently Amended): An artificial leather ~~A leather-like sheet~~ fabricated by infiltrating an aqueous resin dispersion (A) into a fibrous substrate, which satisfies the following requirements (I) to (IV):

(I) the aqueous resin dispersion (A) comprises essentially a main resin (a) stabilized with a surfactant, a polymer (b) having a polyoxyethylene group in its side chains, and a surfactant (c);

(II) the main resin (a) comprises an urethane resin (a1) and/or an urethane-acrylic composite resin(a2), and the resin skeleton contains from 1 to 10 mmols of a carboxyl group per 100 g of the resin;

(III) the polymer (b) is obtained through polymerization of a polyoxyethylene group-having ethylenic unsaturated monomer (b1) and any other ethylenic unsaturated monomer (b2) in a ratio by mass (b1)/(b2) = 60/40 to 100/0;

(IV) the percentage, % by mass (α) of the polyoxyethylene group in the polymer (b) and the number of mols (β) of amino groups per gram of the polymer (b) satisfy the following formula (1):

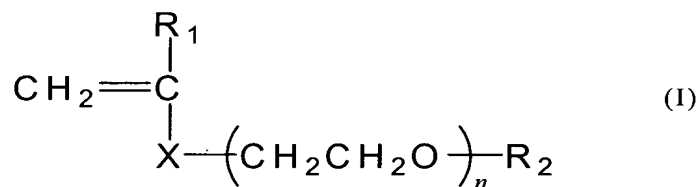
$$35 \leq \alpha + \beta \times 20000 \leq 60 \quad (1).$$

2. (Currently Amended): The artificial leather ~~leather-like sheet~~ as claimed in claim 1, wherein the aqueous resin dispersion (A) further comprises an inorganic metal salt (d).

3. (Currently Amended): The artificial leather ~~leather-like sheet~~ as claimed in claim 1, wherein the main resin (a) is an urethane-acrylic composite resin (a2) in which the ratio by

mass of the urethane resin component to the acrylic polymer component falls between 10/90 and 70/30.

4. (Currently Amended): The artificial leather ~~leather-like sheet~~ as claimed in claim 1, wherein the polyoxyethylene group-having ethylenic unsaturated monomer (b1) is a compound having a structure of the following general formula (I):



wherein R₁ represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group; R₂ is a group selected from an alkyl group, an aryl group or an alkylaryl group having from 1 to 18 carbon atoms; X represents a group selected from -C(=O)O-, -OC(=O)-, -O-, -NHC(=O)-, -C(=O)NH-; and n indicates an integer of 2 or more.

5. (Currently Amended): The artificial leather ~~leather-like sheet~~ as claimed in claim 1, wherein the number, n, of the repetitions of the oxyethylene unit in the polyoxyethylene group-having ethylenic unsaturated monomer (b1) falls between 2 and 10.

6. (Currently Amended): The artificial leather ~~leather-like sheet~~ as claimed in claim 1, wherein the aqueous 10 % solution of the polymer (b) has a clouding point that falls between 10 and 60°C.

7. (Currently Amended): The artificial leather ~~leather-like sheet~~ as claimed in claim 1, wherein the surfactant (c) comprises from 30 to 100 % by mass of a nonionic surfactant

(c1) having an HLB value of from 12 to 18, and from 0 to 70 % by mass of any other surfactant (c2).

8. (Currently Amended): The artificial leather ~~leather-like sheet~~ as claimed in claim 1, wherein the aqueous resin dispersion (A) comprises from 25 to 60 % by mass of a main resin (a), from 0.5 to 10 % by mass of a polymer (b), from 0.5 to 5 % by mass of a surfactant (c) and from 0 to 2 % by mass of an inorganic metal salt (d).

9. (Currently Amended): The artificial leather ~~leather-like sheet~~ as claimed in claim 1, wherein the gelling time of the aqueous resin dispersion (A) kept in a closed condition at 70°C is within 10 minutes, and the viscosity increase in the resin dispersion (A) kept in a closed condition at 40°C for 2 weeks is at most 50 %.

10. (Currently Amended): The artificial leather ~~leather-like sheet~~ as claimed in claim 1, wherein the fibers that constitute the fibrous substrate are ultrafine fibers.

11. (Previously Presented): An aqueous resin dispersion (A) to be infiltrated into fibrous substrates, which satisfies the following requirements (I) to (IV):

(I) the aqueous resin dispersion (A) comprises essentially a main resin(a) stabilized with a surfactant, a polymer (b) having a polyoxyethylene group in its side chains, and a surfactant (c);

(II) the main resin (a) comprises an urethane resin (a1) and/or an urethane-acrylic composite resin (a2), and the resin skeleton contains from 1 to 10 mmols of a carboxyl group per 100 g of the resin;

(III) the polymer (b) is obtained through polymerization of a polyoxyethylene group-having ethylenic unsaturated monomer (b1) and any other ethylenic unsaturated monomer(b2) in a ratio by mass (b1)/(b2) = 60/40 to 100/0;

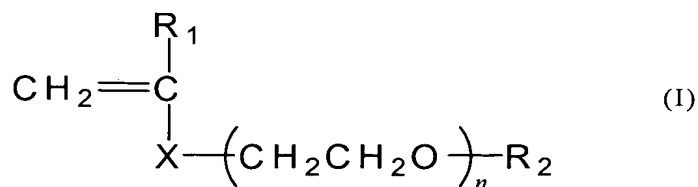
(IV) the percentage, % by mass (α) of the polyoxyethylene group in the polymer (b) and the number of mols (β) of amino groups per gram of the polymer (b) satisfy the following formula (1):

$$35 \leq \alpha + \beta \times 20000 \leq 60 \quad (1).$$

12 (Previously Presented): The aqueous resin dispersion to be infiltrated into fibrous substrates as claimed in claim 11, which further comprises an inorganic metal salt (d).

13. (Original): The aqueous resin dispersion to be infiltrated into fibrous substrates as claimed in claim 11, wherein the main resin (a) is an urethane-acrylic composite resin (a2) in which the ratio by mass of the urethane resin component to the acrylic polymer component falls between 10/90 and 70/30.

14. (Original): The aqueous resin dispersion to be infiltrated into fibrous substrates as claimed in claim 11, wherein the polyoxyethylene unit-having ethylenic unsaturated monomer (b1) is a compound having a structure of the following general formula (I):



wherein R_1 represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group; R_2 is a group selected from an alkyl group, an aryl group or an alkylaryl group having from 1 to 18 carbon atoms; X

represents a group selected from $-C(=O)O-$, $-OC(=O)-$, $-O-$, $-NHC(=O)-$, $-C(=O)NH-$; and n indicates an integer of 2 or more.

15. (Original): The aqueous resin dispersion to be infiltrated into fibrous substrates as claimed in claim 11, wherein the number, n , of the repetitions of the oxyethylene unit in the polyoxyethylene group-having ethylenic unsaturated monomer (b1) falls between 2 and 10.

16. (Original): The aqueous resin dispersion to be infiltrated into fibrous substrates as claimed in claim 11, wherein the aqueous 10 % solution of the polymer (b) has a clouding point that falls between 10 and 60°C.

17. (Previously Presented): The aqueous resin dispersion to be infiltrated into fibrous substrates as claimed in claim 11, wherein the surfactant (c) comprises from 30 to 100 % by mass of a nonionic surfactant (c1) having an HLB value of from 12 to 18, and from 0 to 70 % by mass of any other surfactant (c2).

18. (Previously Presented): The aqueous resin dispersion to be infiltrated into fibrous substrates as claimed in claim 11, which comprises from 25 to 60 % by mass of a main resin (a), from 0.5 to 10 % by mass of a polymer (b), from 0.5 to 5 % by mass of a surfactant (c) and from 0 to 2 % by mass of an inorganic metal salt (d).

19. (Original): The aqueous resin dispersion to be infiltrated into fibrous substrates as claimed in claim 11, of which the gelling time kept in a closed condition at 70°C is within 10 minutes, and the viscosity increase kept in a closed condition at 40°C for 2 weeks is at most 50 %.

20 (Currently Amended): A method for fabricating an artificial leather ~~leather-like sheets~~, which comprises infiltrating an aqueous resin dispersion (A) of claim 11 into a fibrous substrate.

21. (Currently Amended): The method for fabricating an artificial leather ~~leather-like sheets~~ as claimed in claim 20, wherein the fibers that constitute the fibrous substrate are ultrafine fibers-forming fibers and the fibers are converted into ultrafine fibers before or after an aqueous resin dispersion (A) has been applied to the substrate.

22. (Currently Amended) The artificial leather ~~leather-like sheet~~ as claimed in claim 1, wherein the polymer (b) has amino groups.

23. (Currently Amended) The artificial leather ~~leather-like sheet~~ as claimed in claim 1, wherein the polymer (b) does not have amino groups.

24. (Previously Presented) The aqueous resin dispersion as claimed in claim 11, wherein the polymer (b) has amino groups.

25. (Previously Presented) The aqueous resin dispersion as claimed in claim 11, wherein the polymer (b) does not have amino groups.